

The Big White Lie

There are acts I would never commit. I would never steal, I dare not play truant, and not even in my wildest dreams would I pick a fight. Oddly enough, I will claim not to know who ate the last cookie, and will never give my honest opinion on how you look in that new dress. Call me lying, dishonest and truth- bending, but is honesty always best?

Truth be told, we appreciate acts of honesty. When you lose your wallet, you would surely prefer someone to find it and return it, with everything intact, to a money- grabbing opportunist who will happily pocket your valuables. It is comforting to know that we are surrounded by honest, good-willed Samaritans who put the interests of others before themselves. Then again, being truthful is not the only way to accomplish that noble aim; instead, it may very well leave you further than where you started.

There are two kinds of lies: a damaging, hurtful lie, and a harmless white lie. We have seen more than enough examples of fibs, but to distinguish between the two categories is not always simple or straightforward.

Consider this classic example: You are approached by a vain but unattractive lady who inquires, "How do I look?" She is dressed to the nines in her usual splendor; sadly this only makes her look worse than ever. You can be absolutely honest and tell her that she looks hideous, only to hurt her feelings but save her from further embarrassment. Alternatively, you can lie and say that she looks wonderful, which will send her up to cloud nine, but create the laughing stock of the week.

So perhaps white lies are not foolproof either. But the question remains, which should I use?

I think that the answer lies with the individual. It is up to us to use our discretion to determine the outcome we desire before we speak. The use of honesty or a lie will yield starkly different

results from the same scenario.

I was caught in a precarious situation. My elder cousin was about to wed his high school sweetheart. He was not Prince Charming; more of an Average Joe, who was at least decent in all aspects. I have only met his fiancée on several occasions, but from my impression of her, she was not quite the lady for him.

I'm not denying the fact that she earned her Masters at Cambridge or frequently volunteers at the animal shelter, but these are pretty much the reasons why I find them incompatible. Her ambitious and extroverted nature just might not blend with his easy-going habits. I always kept my opinion of her to myself, but I was unable to do so anymore when my cousin popped the question, "Do you think Shanice will make a good wife?"

"Well, I think she seems ok."

I lied, but whenever I see the blissful young couple getting along just fine, I think I said the right thing.

Pang Jay Mi 313 (18)